

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The above-identified patent application has been reviewed in light of the Examiner's Action dated January 10, 2007. Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13-16, 18 and 19 have been amended. Claim 19 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite. Claims 1-5, 8-10 and 13-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of a combination of Buzon and newly-cited U.S. Patent 4,668,119 to Galletti ("Galletti"). Claims 6-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of a combination of Buzon, Galletti and Thorpe. Claims 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of a combination of Buzon, Galletti and Oyama.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

Claim 19 has been rejected as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's identification of this error and an appropriate amendment has been made. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103 - Buzon and Galletti

Claims 1-5, 8-10 and 13-20 have been rejected as being obvious in light of Buzon and Galletti. The majority of these claims, importantly independent Claims 1 and 14, have been amended to more succinctly claim embodiments of the present invention. More specifically, it is respectfully asserted that the Examiner has continuously and erroneously equated the spaced ribs as claimed with threads found in Buzon and Galletti. For example, the Examiner has stated that Buzon includes a plurality of "horizontally oriented ribs" and points to the protrusions found on Buzon's intermediate member (see #301 of Fig. 18). However, Buzon, at column 7, line 45, clearly states that the intermediate member is threaded, which is distinctly different from the claimed ribs.

Further, Galletti has been cited for disclosing a plurality of non-continuous horizontally oriented ribs. However, Galletti distinctly shows a coupling that employs threads that are adapted for engagement and tightening to form a bayonet like joint. (See Fig. 1 and col. 2, lines 30-45). Thus, as the male coupling is rotated with respect to the female coupling, the mating threads tighten, which is distinct from the ribs provided by the present invention that do not employ a threaded interconnection that tightens as the coupling is progressively rotated.

In order to clear up this apparent confusion, Claims 1 and 14 have been amended to distinctly describe the ribs to further distinguish the claimed invention over Buzon and Galletti. More specifically, the ribs as now claimed are in a parallel relationship with respect to the ends of the base and support members. Conversely, Buzon and Galletti each include threads that have an angled orientation relative to the ends of their respective tubular sections (see for example Galletti, Fig. 1). The angled threads of Buzon and Galletti allow for screw-like interconnection wherein the rib configuration of the claimed invention provides discrete height adjustments that is very different from a threaded interconnection.

In order to establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). Since neither of the cited references disclose ribs as contemplated, withdrawal of the rejections to independent Claims 1 and 14 is respectfully requested. Applicants also respectfully traverse the remainder of the Examiner's assertions as to what is disclosed in and/or taught by in Buzon and Galletti. That is, since the arguments made herein are believed to sufficiently address the rejections, any Examiner assertions not specifically addressed are not admitted as true.

Further, Claims 2-5, 8-10 and 13, which depend on allowable Claim 1 and Claims 15-20, which depend on allowable Claim 14, are believed allowable since they depend on allowable base claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103 - Buzon, Galletti and Thorpe

Claims 6-7 have been rejected as being obvious in light of a combination of Buzon, Galletti and Thorpe. To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). Since, as set forth above, a non-threaded interconnection is not found in either Buzon, Galletti or Thorpe, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. also respectfully traverse the remainder of the Examiner's assertions as to what is disclosed in and/or taught by in Buzon, Galletti and Thorpe. That is, since the arguments made herein are believed to sufficiently address the rejections, any Examiner assertions not specifically addressed are not admitted as true.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103 - Buzon, Galletti and Oyama

Claims 11-12 have been rejected as being obvious in light of a combination of Buzon, Galletti and Oyama. Again, since all of the elements claimed, for example a non-threaded interconnection, are not found in the combination of the cited references withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants also respectfully traverse the remainder of the Examiner's assertions as to what is disclosed in and/or taught by in Buzon, Galletti and Oyama. That is, since the arguments made herein are believed to sufficiently address the rejections, any Examiner assertions not specifically address are not admitted as true.

Conclusion

Based at least upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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